

Community Comments

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Newsletter

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STAFF ANNIVERSARY--the five of us have been working together for one year

This "job" turned out differently! The first day I came to Community Service remains a curious and comical incident to me. Being used to "boss vs. employee" working conditions, I came to the modest residential-looking office prepared to assume the role of lowly worker once more. I'd judged this predicament as probably more desirable than other situations because I knew of Arthur Morgan and looked forward to meeting him. Armed with my formal working girl office attire, I meekly asked whether I was "allowed" to use the telephone for personal calls and if it was alright to dress less formally. It took me several weeks to ease my unnecessary business-like conditioning, let down my hair and relax so that I could be "me" at work as well as at home. Working here during the last year is like a breath, a long breath of fresh air. Though I may move on some day to other work, I can not envision laboring creatively and as a whole person without a similarly free atmosphere.

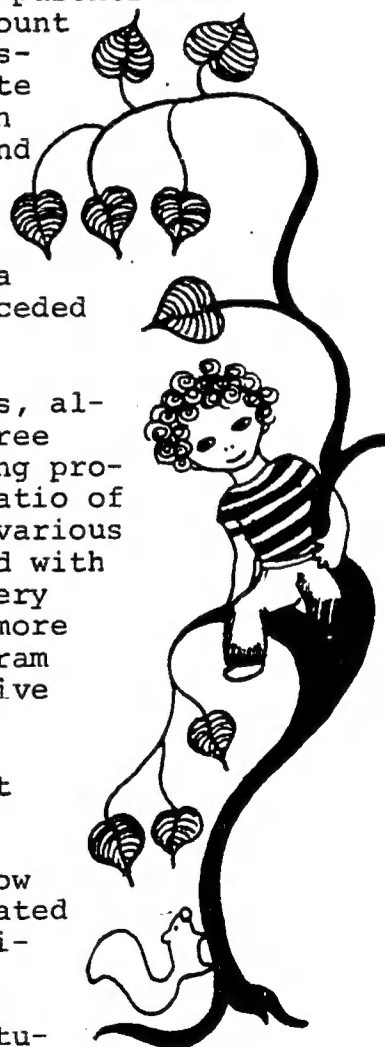
There are frustrating problems and questions here at C.S. (money and more concise direction among them), but staff cooperation and communication is not one of them. We come from very different though largely middle-class white backgrounds. Although sharing some elements of lifestyle, we have different needs and expectations for our lives. Actually, that's a universal situation when people anywhere work together. Somehow here, for the first time in my working experience, there exists a quiet unforced tolerance and respect for the other person and a sense of "we're all heading for the same goal" that greatly facilitates decision and policy making. There may be no greater satisfaction for me than working within this working context.--one of the staff for the staff

BEGINNING COOPERATIVE CHILD-CARE

After several abortive attempts during the past summer people's energies in Yellow Springs flowed together to bring about the opening of the Community Infant Center. We were able to rent from Antioch College a large dormitory common room and its adjoining rooms at minimal cost. We figured out our shoestring budget on the basis of 2 part-time staff and a coordinator, supplemented by parents who would be credited for their work-time with a certain amount of free time for their children. None of us were professionals, but we all had children under 3 and had definite goals for cooperative child-care. After working through preliminary problems, we scrubbed down our new center and scrounged and assembled toys, cribs and high chairs. The day before we were to open the summer rains caused the flooding of our newly polished floors and we anguished over having a community wading pool instead of a day care center! But by the next day the waters had receded and the problem has not reoccurred.

Our children range in age from a year to 2¹/₂ years, although theoretically we would accept infants down to three months. We have an average of 15 children in the morning program and 7 in the afternoon. We have found we need a ratio of one adult to 3 or 4 children in order to allow for the various chores that need to be done and still have folks engaged with the children. Our equipment at present is limited to very simple toys, because of lack of funds and time to make more elaborate equipment. Within a fairly unstructured program we make an effort to encourage development of skills, give a lot of supportive attention, encourage but not force cooperation, and have fun! The fact that the kids look forward to going to the center is a good indication that we are doing well.

We want the Center to be a part of the larger Yellow Springs and Antioch community and have already incorporated the use of college and high school volunteers. An architecture class has been designing outdoor play equipment for us as one of their projects. We hope to develop a child development course for the high school in which students would get practical experience working at the Center. And we have evening programs planned for the parents and later for townspeople on various topics relating to child-care.



The experience we want our children to have, that of being part of a group, is one that we are also gaining. Since our present educational system and culture puts little or no emphasis on group life and problem solving we are caught in the frustrating position of trying to teach our children something of which we ourselves know little. Although we have had little difficulty agreeing on goals we have had to struggle to develop a governing body that is responsible to the desires of the parents, and still get the work done with a minimum of bureaucracy. From a completely unstructured body of whatever parents came to meetings and various tasks we have changed to having a steering committee whose members are responsible for various committees and functions. The steering committee has not been functioning long enough to judge its efficiency but so far our general experience has been that so much energy is tied up in meetings that little is left for the tasks which need to be done to develop a really good program. One wonders whether an anarchical situation would not be more efficient in which each did what he or she saw fit in carrying out the tasks at hand.

Most of our areas of conflict revolve around things over which we have little control: lack of money (of course) and stringent requirements for licensing which force us to do such ineane things as either knock out a wall to make an exit or spend the \$100 necessary to install a lighted exit sign. A lot of tension is created because people are not used to dealing with a situation in which they have group responsibility. Gripes, instead of being dealt with directly and openly, are often dumped on the easiest scapegoat--the coordinator. It is often a weary struggle, but it is very exciting to be a part of a grassroots effort to develop a community service.



BUSINESS REFORM WORKSHOP

A dozen people came to the business reform weekend Oct. 19-20 from Palo Alto, Cal., Ithaca, N.Y., Wichita, Ks., and Cincinnati, joined by half dozen from Yellow Springs. The styles of business ranged from a communal work family to non-profit organization to liberal management with operations involving from a half dozen to 40 people. Our views of business--our reasons for being in business--were quite different. Ithaca Project sees their businesses as tools for widespread economic and social change while the Dinky Universal Church (producers of Clear Light film in Palo Alto) is creating work/living situations for the unfolding of personal lives in a spiritual atmosphere. Central Graphics in Kansas has shifted from the more conventional "business for profit" perspective towards being a workers' fellowship with a social conscience. Antioch Bookplate Company in Yellow Springs started in the 1920's with a socialist orientation (perhaps similar to the Ithaca Project), yet through efforts with worker control has become much more of a conventional business.

Working with a small intimate group of people we were able to explore our differences and dreams more personally. There was a sense of a beginning across the country; a sense that more and more people, individuals, unions and corporations are trying to find a new way in economic enterprise and support. We talked about how to encourage efforts at change in business processes and objectives, but

did not get much further than planning more communication (a newsletter) and publicity. Everyone seemed to want further opportunities to share ideas and action with other people interested in business reform. More questions were raised than answered.

From Community Service's point of view it was good to bring people together. People are only beginning to think of the potential of the "community economy". Interest seemed to be concentrated on each group's internal operation or the effect on the national economy. There was very little concern expressed for local economy, the neighborhood situation. In part this is reasonable since business has been considered by many of us as a necessary evil. When we discover individuals groping for different ways of doing business our interest centers on how they are doing it and what they have learned rather than on what makes the economic picture whole. . . the local neighborhood economy on whose back rides the national economic future.

Helpful Books:

THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVOLUTION--NOTES ON THE PASSING OF ORGANIZATION MAN; George Berkley, Prentice Hall 1971
EVERY EMPLOYEE A MANAGER; M. Scott Meyers, McGraw-Hill 1970
THE FAILURE OF SUCCESS; Alfred Marrow, Amacom 1972
THE JOB REVOLUTION; Judson Gooding, Walker and Co. 1972
WORK AND THE NATURE OF MAN; Frederick Herzberg, World Pub. Co. 1971
NEW PATTERNS OF MANAGEMENT; Rensis Likert, McGraw-Hill 1961
PEOPLE OF PERSONNEL: DECENTRALIZING AND THE MIXED SYSTEM; Paul Goodman, Random House 1965
THE HUMAN SIDE OF ENTERPRISE; Douglas McGregor, McGraw-Hill 1960
ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL; Gordon Lippett, Appleton-Century-Crofts 1969
THE BUSINESS CONFERENCE: LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION; Harold Zelko, McGraw-Hill 1969
WORK AND COMMUNITY: THE SCOTT BADER COMMONWEALTH; Fred Blum, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1968
THE LIBERATION OF WORK; Folkert Wilken, Roy Publishers 1969 (& us)
SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL; Fritz Schumacher
THE COMMUNITY'S NEED FOR AN ECONOMY; Griscom Morgan, Community Serv.
WORLD ECONOMY; Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press
INDUSTRIES FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES; Arthur Morgan, Community Service.

People from these businesses were at the worksessions:

Central Graphics, Box 351, Wichita, Kansas 67201 (responsible for newsletter)

Antioch Bookplate Co., Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

Ithaca Project, 310 4th St., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Universal Color Labs, Box 6568, Stanford, Ca. 94305

SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY LIVING. . . to start here

Plans are being made for what we call a "school of community living" here. This is conceived as an ordered and planned process by which people who desire it can learn to knit together and practice a way of life in all its aspects in a going village community. We imagine such a center serving both the local area and a small group of resident students. Community Service does not have a magic formula for making us all beautifully community-aware people. Rather this will be a place to share in a struggle--the development of sen-

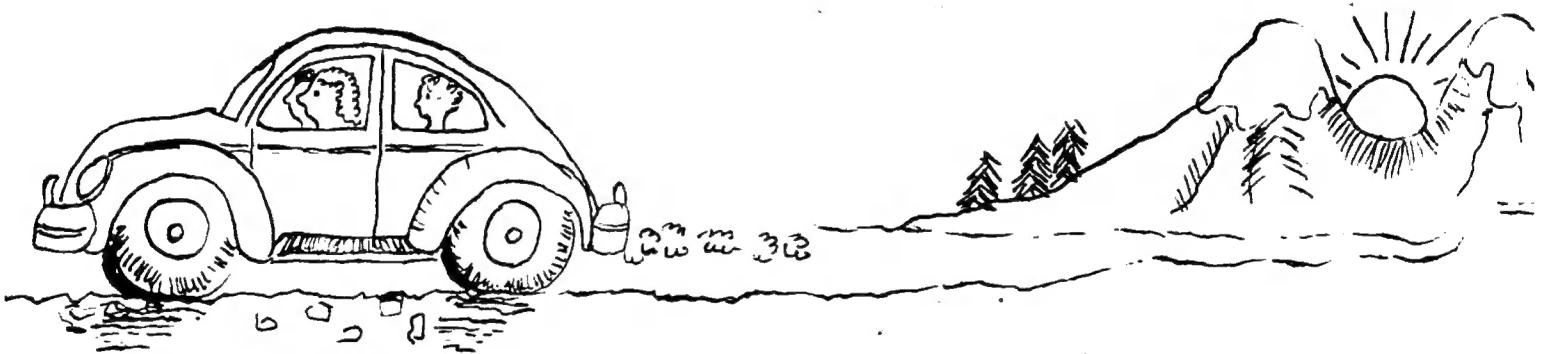
sitivity and skills necessary for life in human community. How can we nurture social understanding and self knowledge? How can we put such personal and social insights to work?

Community Service is thinking about various forms for the "school". Participants might live with Yellow Springs families or in group houses. How can we encourage the experience of household living to become knowledge of ourselves and groups?

The plan is for people to be able to earn the money for tuition while part of the school program. Should we encourage group work situations, a builders' coop, odd jobs collective, or gardening group? Or arrange individual internships with craftspeople, municipal government, area schools, a credit union? Such work will be an integral part of the school.

How much formal study will there be? Philosophy and history of community? Social psychology? Economics? Seminars will be begun on a small scale to feel our way into an expanding program.

Preparation for the School of Community Living will go on this coming year. A stable group in Yellow Springs that wants to take in "students" as part of a wider fellowship needs to come together. This group and the Community Service corporation will have to evolve the beginning program.



SOME RECENT TRAVELS. . .

Two of us spent about five weeks together traveling almost 7,000 miles across Canada, the coast and Southwest United States. During our whirlwind tour we visited three communities and would like to share with you some of what we saw folks working on.

We arrived at Argenta, B.C., after a ferry ride and a couple hours of back road travel up the Kootenay Lake. Carved into the forested hills along the bank of the lake, is The Argenta Friends School and the homes of the other 80 or so folks that make up the loosely knit Argenta community. The boarding school was a warm place where 11th and 12th graders live as family units in faculty homes. The students' school experience is very much integrated into their living experience. The same is true of the faculty who, as part of their commitment, are involved in a group living class. The Stevensons who started the school and the other faculty contribute greatly

to the spirit of the school. The population of Argenta has grown recently and some folks are more community oriented than others. There are oldtimers who say with an air of sadness that, "It's not like it used to be", but others are more hopeful about the new influx of people and accompanying changes. An interesting development has been the Land Coop which holds 200 acres in common divided into 10 plots. Anyone who wishes may buy into the coop as long as there is land available. Most of the plots have been sold and various sorts of owner-built homes from simple log cabins to a more elaborate split-level are being constructed. The coop people are now at the point of deciding what their relationship to each other should be and what type of industry they can create to support themselves.

Traveling back into the States we stopped at the Alpha Farm west of Eugene, Oregon. About 15-20 people have been living communally on this 200 acre farm for a year and a half. They do enough gardening to supply some of the needs of the farm and of a small community restaurant-craft store in a little town down the road. The farm asks that new members give up their financial assets to the commune and that they also invest in the land. Alpha Farm is different from many communes in that it includes young folks as well as those in their 50's. It was readily apparent that much energy (emotional, as well as physical) is necessary to keep a farm like Alpha running: in one day we helped dig 900 pounds of potatoes!

One of our last stops before heading home was to visit a friend who lives Northeast of Sante Fe, New Mexico, on some land which is an hour drive on winding dirt roads from the main highway. Several years ago 3 of the 4 families bought this land and dubbed it "The Private Sector Welfare Farm". At that time they were more interested in "getting away from it all" than in coming together; they wanted to live as basically as possible. Several simple but beautiful homes were constructed. Our friend's is an adobe with a rock foundation, hand-made adobe bricks, car windshields for windows, and huge beams as ceiling supports. These folks erected a windmill and dug irrigation ditches for gardening. But they discovered that personal relationships were at least as difficult as physical labor. One marriage broke up, and a split caused by different desires for self-sufficiency resulted in another family leaving. The present folks are making efforts to have individual points of contact with life in the nearest town, hoping that this will decrease the intensity of their own relationships. But at the same time they are making an effort to come together by sharing a meal once a week. A problem that remains, though, is that the energy needed to get into town, and the moving between the different life styles is very draining.

Traveling tends to give an overview and certain perspective to things. We were able to see people in many different situations working toward self-actualization and community building. So many times after overcoming many physical problems through creativity and a hell of a lot of hard work, folks bang into the unexpected relationship problems and the same creativity and energy doesn't seem to work nearly as well. Here at Community Service we are thinking about the efforts of those with whom we have come into contact, trying to draw together our own experiences in order to find some direction for

learning about and dealing with community struggles on the personal level. In doing this we are also searching out directions into which our proposed School of Community Living can move.



COMMUNITY SERVICE APPALACHIAN OUTREACH

Director Griscom Morgan and Board member David Jehnsen have been working for the past year with a community action program in Appalachian Ohio. They were invited by OEO Director Cecil Cook Jr. to bring Community Service's perspective to two of the poorest counties in the state. While planning for this program they met with Harry Rosenberg, acting Deputy Director of the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development, and from this ensued a conference between Mr. Rosenberg and some of the State's Community Action Agency, legal service and other personnel and Dave and Gris and some of our associates such as Dale Miller from Akron's Operation Fight and Walter Cates of Columbus Black Brother Confederation. Gris and Dave have been greatly impressed with Harry Rosenberg, and he so valued the conference that he has had published as a department pamphlet an edited transcript of the conference entitled "Advocacy for the Disadvantaged" (available from C.S.). Harry's introduction to the pamphlet poses the problems arising from the progressive withdrawal of federal governmental support for services to the poor and disadvantaged.

In their meetings in Adams and Brown counties Dave and Gris and their associates are discovering good response to the perspective they present of active community involvement within neighborhoods, among the disadvantaged, within agency personnel, and over the counties. This is now reinforced by an intentional community base in the Bruce Ashley's and Mike Wrench's homestead. Mike is OEO Director in Brown County and Bruce is medical director of the two county Clinic. The endeavor in community organization work there is to help groups of concerned people both citizens and professionals to find freedom, effectiveness and joy in tackling urgent issues together with competence, vision and hope. As an example, transportation to obtain vital services and supplies for the disadvantaged in Brown County and child care for working mothers in Adams County have been determined priority problems. Such development of initiative and mutual aid can survive the demise of federal supported programs. As in other projects with which we have been concerned, we regard this as a long time involvement not to be terminated by the cut-off of state funds. By the way, the Ashleys and Wrenchs are looking for an individual or family to join them in their life and work.

GROUPS AND THINGS

Gabram from the Gelso Verde Community in Padova, Italy, is seeking the formation of an Intercultural World Movement of Communities (IWMC). Analyzing the destructive history of world power systems,

the fledgling IWMC would stress action on the part of communities to create "diffusion centres" (with focus on information gathering and knowledge sharing), alternative school systems, hostels and hospitality systems, community markets, technological, agricultural and political alternatives. IWMC would disseminate knowledge and share ideas on alternative social, cultural, and economic systems with the purpose of ending the self-defeating practices of war and competition between nations. Acting as a world network keeping communities in touch with one another, the leadership is conceived of as each individual becoming the "movement" where he/she is now. Share your ideas or request information from Gabram, Gelso Verde Community, Via Chioggia 31, 35100 Padova, Italy.

COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS IN 1974

February 1st Saturday--Community Service, Inc. Board Meeting

End of April--Members' fellowship meeting (mini-conference)

June 1st Saturday--Board Meeting

Mid-August--Annual Community Service Conference

October 1st Saturday--Membership business meeting (reports, election, etc.) Board Meeting

Never seen win?!

At a time when our movement seems to be pulling apart into many different directions WIN seeks to put it all together—to make clear the connections between the women's movement and the ecology movement, to highlight the contradictions between the lawlessness in Washington and the platitudes of even the most "liberal" politicians, to create a basis for understanding between the peace movement and those in the counter-culture actively constructing alternatives to the present system.

To cover the many facets of our movement means that each issue of WIN is unique and surprising. No wonder New York's *Village Voice* described WIN as "the liveliest magazine on the left." And Abbie Hoffman has said that "WIN provides valuable information to a nationwide network of freedom fighters."



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